

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 45-46

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT
11 February 1980

*Interview With Robert C. Byrd,
Senate Majority Leader*

Crises Abroad: How Congress Will Respond

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**Beefed-up defense budget,
draft registration, more authority
for the CIA—President Carter will get
all the tools he needs to deal with
overseas threats, predicts
the Senate's top Democrat.**

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Q The President has discussed improving the efficiency of the Central Intelligence Agency. Do you think Congress moved too far against the CIA several years ago? Will Congress now reduce the number of House and Senate committees involved in CIA oversight?

A I think Congress went too far—our whole society went too far—in condemning the actions of the CIA in a broad-brush way.

There were abuses. No question about that. There needs to be a continuing authority and a continuing accounting. I think the pendulum swung too far, required too much accounting, too much reporting, and demoralized the CIA and restrained it from some of the necessary activities that it must conduct in the interests of our national security.

I don't think the pendulum should swing back too far in the other direction. But there must be a reduction in the number of committees, in the number of members of both houses—to whom reporting must be made. At present, the CIA reports to eight committees with about 200 members of the House and the Senate—and this is ridiculous.

Q Are the congressmen who are on committees that would lose jurisdiction over the CIA likely to give up that privilege?

A I think there's a general recognition that we went too far, and that in the interest of our national security, there must be some changes.

The important thing is that the CIA be accountable to the Congress and be accountable to the President in connection with covert activities outside the country, in the main. We're not talking about narrowing the information. We're narrowing the points of exposure. As long as the members of the House and Senate intelligence committees are informed, then Congress is informed.

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